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Two new species of Entomoculiini (Coleoptera, Staphylinidae, Leptotyphlinae) from Kérkyra, Greece

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Abstract

Two new species of Entomoculiini, *Allotyphlus* (s. str.) *pavesii* and *Entomoculia* (s. str.) *cassiopaea*, from the Ionian Island of Kérkyra, are described. While the first taxon belongs to a homogeneous group of five species already known from the island, the second represents a remarkable finding, as it exhibits intermediate characters between the genera *Entomoculia* (s. str.) and *Allotyphlus* (*Moreotyphlus*). It is herein assigned to the former genus, making it the easternmost known species and the first record of the genus in both the country and the Balkan Peninsula.

Key Words

Allotyphlus, endemism, endogean, *Entomoculia*, Ionian Islands, new species, Rove beetles, soil fauna

Introduction

Rove beetles belonging to the subfamily Leptotyphlinae are all adapted to subterranean life, being very small (approximately 1–2 mm), parallel-sided, slender, apterous, anophthalmous and depigmented. They are present in the Western Palaearctic (especially in the Mediterranean Basin), as well as in the Afrotropical, Nearctic, Neotropical and Australasian Regions. Due to their limited dispersal ability and dependence on undisturbed soil, they exhibit a high level of endemism, except for *Gynotyphlus perpusillus* Dodero, 1900, a parthenogenetic species widespread in the Mediterranean Region.

To date, 613 valid species have been described, assigned to 47 genera; of these, 51 species belonging to 13 genera are known from the Balkan Peninsula (Hlaváč et al. 2025). The tribe Entomoculiini, which includes relatively large, well-sclerotised and robust species, is characterised by the presence of a deep transverse sulcus at least on the fifth visible sternite and a second maxillary palpomere that is dilated and larger than the third one. This tribe is found only in the Mediterranean Basin and the Canary Islands and includes seven genera: *Romanotyphlus* Struyve, *Neocyrtotyphlus* Pace, *Cyrtotyphlus* Dodero, *Entomoculia* Croissandeau, *Paratyphlus* Blackwelder, *Mesotyphlus* Coiffait and *Allotyphlus* Coiffait.

The first two genera are monospecific and have very restricted distributions (Romania and Apulia, Italy, respectively). *Cyrtotyphlus* has a scattered distribution across Northern Italy (Eastern Prealps and Northern Apennines) and the Balkan Peninsula (Croatia, Slovenia, Greece, Montenegro and Romania). *Entomoculia* (with 136 species in Italy, France, Spain, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and the Canary Islands), *Paratyphlus* (with 47 species in Portugal, Spain, Sardinia, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia) and *Mesotyphlus* (with 40 species in Portugal, Spain, Italy and France) occur in the western part of the Mediterranean Basin, while *Allotyphlus* is found with 26 species in the eastern Mediterranean (Greece, Serbia, Turkey) and Italy, in Gargano (Apulia, Italy) and Veneto (Eastern Prealps, Italy) (Pace 1996; Herman 2001; Schülke and Smetana 2015; Hlaváč et al. 2025).

The Ionian Archipelago is one of the most thoroughly studied areas in the Balkans regarding Leptotyphlinae fauna, thanks to the research conducted by Emil Moczarski (1879–1945), Max Beier (1903–1979) and

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Henri Coiffait (1907–1989). The Archipelago hosts eight species of *Allotyphlus* (Entomoculiini), two species of *Gynotyphlus*, one species of *Epirotyphlus* and the only known species of *Rhopalotyphlus* (Metrotyphlini). The Island of Kérkyra is known to host five species of Entomoculiini, all belonging to the nominal subgenus of *Allotyphlus*: *Allotyphlus achileus* Coiffait, 1959, *Allotyphlus corcyranus* Coiffait, 1959, *Allotyphlus corcyricus* (Scheerpeltz, 1958), *Allotyphlus dexter* Coiffait, 1959 and *Allotyphlus sinester* Coiffait, 1959.

The finding of a new species belonging to this genus, described herein, is not surprising and confirms the high degree of speciation undergone by this group of species on the Island. On the other hand, the discovery of a new Entomoculiini species exhibiting characters intermediate between *Entomoculia* and *Allotyphlus* (*Moreotyphlus*) is particularly noteworthy, especially given that the collection locality lies between the known distributions of the two genera.

Materials and methods

The specimens were collected with the soil-washing technique (see Andújar and Grebennikov (2021); Andújar et al. (2024); Barrios-Izás et al. (2024); Hlaváč et al. (2025)) and examined on temporary slides in glycerine, with or without cover glass, under a Reichert Microstar IV compound microscope up to 400× magnification. The images were taken with a Nikon Coolpix S6900 camera attached to the ocular of the same microscope and stacked with Zerene Stacker 1.04 software. Drawings and graphic elaborations were done with the vector graphics editor Inkscape 1.0.1. Measurements and scale bars were taken with the same microscope and a micrometric ocular at 200× (sensitivity ± 0.0047 mm) and 400× magnification (sensitivity ± 0.0025 mm). The specimens were prepared both dried on mounting paper board and entirely included in DMHF on acetate microslides, after clarification in a 10% potassium hydroxide (KOH) solution. Genitalia and other dissected parts were mounted in DMHF on acetate microslides and pinned with the respective specimens. The material examined in this study is deposited in the following public and private collections: MSNM (Museo di Storia Naturale, Milano, Italy), cMV (Michele Violi, personal collection, Montecchio Emilia, Reggio Emilia, Italy), cMP (Maurizio Pavesi, personal collection, Milano, Italy) and cLF (Luca Fancelllo, personal collection, Cagliari, Italy). Terminology for the morphology follows Pace (1996).

Results

***Entomoculia* (*Entomoculia*) *cassiopaea* Violi, sp. nov.**

https://zoobank.org/CC9BDE09-0827-4BF2-B90A-777D5A74564E

Figs 1–8

Type material. ***Holotype***. Greece • ♂; Kérkyra, 2 km W Kassiopi, Apraos Bay; 39°47'40"N, 19°53'41"E; 10 m a.s.l.; 29 Mar 1998; M. Pavesi leg.; MSNM. ***Paratypes***. Greece • 1 ♀; same collecting data as holotype; cMV. • 3 ♂; same collecting locality; 4–8 Dec 1999; cMV. • 1 ♂; same collecting locality; 22 Feb 1996; incomplete (without head); cMV.

Diagnosis. Maxillary palpi with palpomere 2 dilated, about twice as wide as 3; palpomere 4 smaller than 3; labrum bidentate; antennae with 10 antennomeres. Tarsal formula 3-3-3. Visible tergites 1–5 (III–VII) and visible sternites 2–4 (IV–VI) with shallow basal impression; visible sternite 5 (VII) with deep transversal furrow, visible sternite 6 (VIII) of male slightly asymmetric, with posterior margin prolonged in obtuse latero-median angle toward left side; male visible sternite 7 (IX) with lateral margins asymmetric, strongly chitinised; aedeagus well differentiated from the other species of the genus, with median lobe prolonged by short slender ventral lamina, lacking setae; parameres short, symmetric, with two apical and two subapical setae.

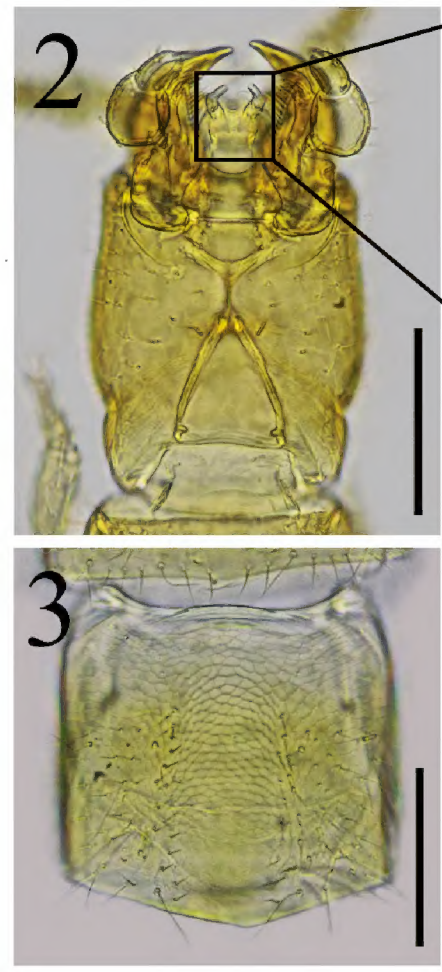
Description. Male. ***Body*** (Fig. 1) about 1.6 mm long, completely depigmented.

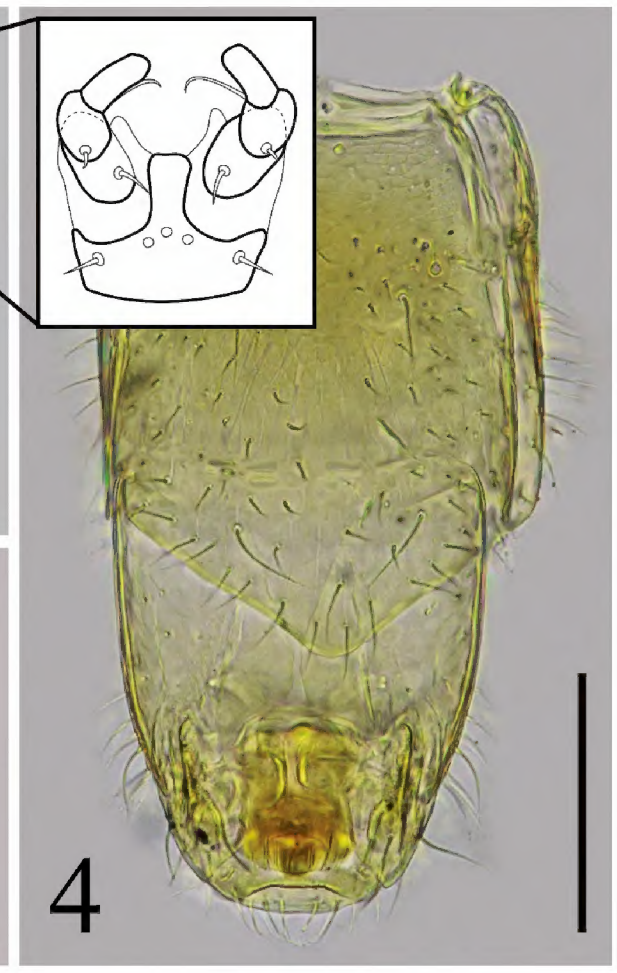
Head capsule (Fig. 2) 1.3 times longer than wide and almost as wide as pronotum; head capsule separated from neck region by occipital constriction. Dorsal surface entirely covered with poorly-impressed microreticulation, microstriolated posterior to constriction, both on ventral and dorsal side; gular sutures confluent anteriorly at about mid-length of head capsule, after meeting point again separated to two divergent sutures. Maxillary palpi with palpomere 2 dilated, about twice as wide as 3; palpomere 4 smaller than 3. Labium (Fig. 2, detail) with ligula divided into four lobes, the inner ones smaller and acuminate, the outer ones larger and rounded. Labrum (Fig. 8) bidentate, with 12 setae. Antennae (Fig. 5) with 10 antennomeres; scape shorter than terminal antennomere, about 1.5 times as long as wide; pedicel as long as wide, as wide as scape, twice as long as antennomere 3; antennomeres 3–9 transverse; 3, 4 and 6 subequal in length; antennomere 5 larger than 4 and 6; 5 and 7 subequal in length; 7, 8 and 9 with increasing sizes; terminal antennomere subtriangular, pointed to apex, 1.5 times as longer as wide.

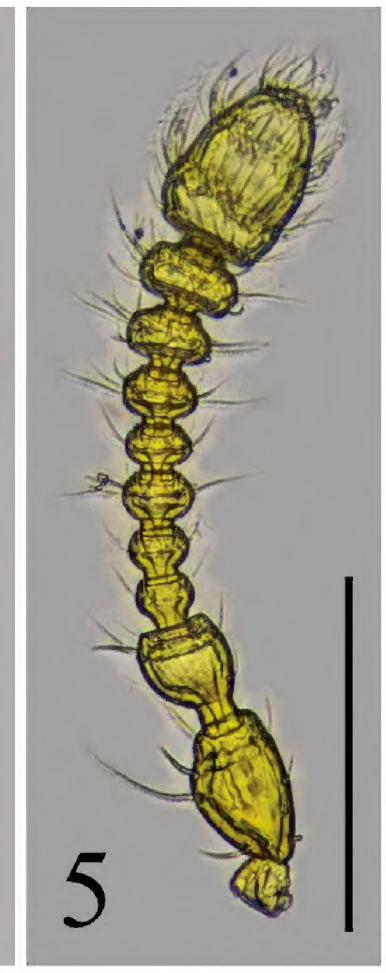
Prothorax. Pronotum about 1.07 times as long as wide, widest in anterior third, after that convergent posteriorly; anterior and posterior margin slightly convex; anterior and posterior angles widely rounded; dorsal surface smooth; procoxal cavities rounded, with middle spiniform projection reaching the posterior margin of prosternum. Proepisternum and prosternum microreticulated near procoxal cavities.

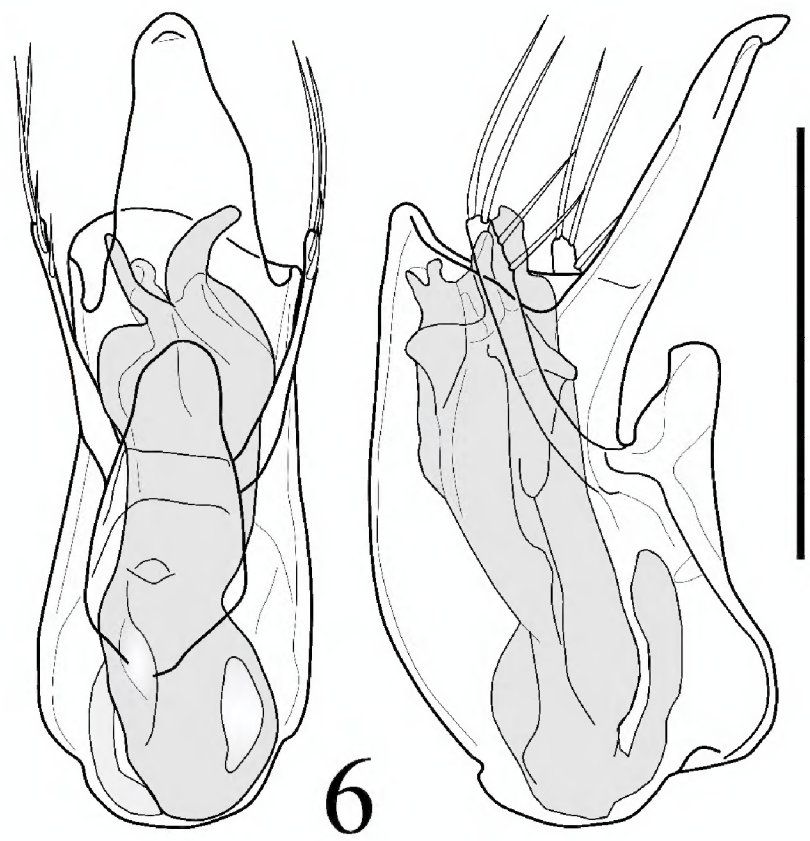
Pterothorax. Elytra about as long as wide, smooth, with posterior margin convex, converging to the suture. Scutellum, meso- and metaventrite microreticulated.

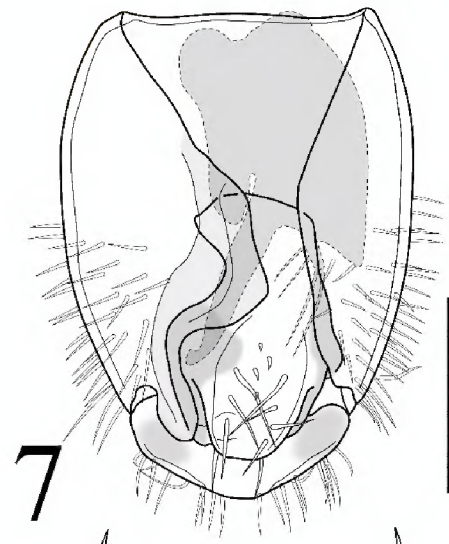
Abdomen. Visible tergites 1–5 (IV–VIII) and visible sternites 2–4 (IV–VI) with shallow basal impression, visible sternite 5 (VII) with deep transverse sulcus. Visible sternites 1–4 microreticulated in the anterior half, the visible sternite 5 (VII) microreticulated only anteriorly to the transverse sulcus. Visible tergite 6 (VIII) expanded in posterior half and with slightly rounded, almost straight, apical margin. Visible sternite 6 (VIII) (Fig. 3) with longitudinal median deep groove, its surface sha-

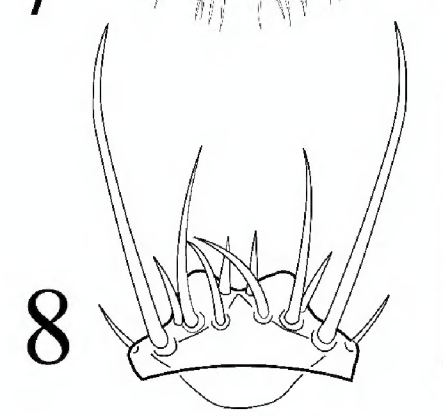












Figures 1–8. *Entomoculia* (*Entomoculia*) *cassiopaea* sp. nov. from Kèrkyra, Greece. **1.** Habitus (holotype); **2.** Head, ventral view, with detail of labium; **3.** Male visible sternite 6 (VIII), ventral view; **4.** Female visible sternite 5 (VII) and genital segment, ventral view; **5.** Antenna; **6.** Aedeagus, ventral (on the left) and right side (on the right); **7.** Male visible tergite and sternite 7 (IX), ventral view; **8.** Labrum. Scale bars: 0.5 mm (**1**), 0.1 mm (**2–7**), 0.05 mm (**8**).

greened and lateral sides bordered by line of short setae, posterior margin asymmetric, with an angulate projection slightly shifted to left side. Visible tergite 7 (IX) (Fig. 7) with strongly chitinised margins, right side with deep indentation. Sternite 7 (IX) (Fig. 7) asymmetric, with distal part indented and curved to right side, posterior margin rounded, with sides strongly chitinised, exposed part microreticulated with two rows of 4–5 longer setae. Tergite 8 (X) simple, with rounded margin.

Legs short, all tibiae distally dilated, femora dilated in the middle, all trochanter unarmed, lacking any spiniform process, tarsal formula 3-3-3.

Aedeagus (Fig. 6) recumbent on left side in abdomen, about 0.20 mm long, with median lobe prolonged by short, slender, ventral lamina converging towards the apex, with indentation near apex, lacking ventral setae; parameres short, symmetric, with two apical and two subapical setae. Distal margin of the median lobe capsule straight, not indented, reaching apex of parameres.

Female. Similar to male. Visible sternite 5 (VII) (Fig. 4) with sharp triangular shape in posterior margin. Genital segment as in Fig. 4.

Etymology. Locotypic, named after the type locality Kassiopi.

Distribution. Greece (Kérkyra).

Ecology. Together with the next described new species, this taxon is only known from its type locality, a restricted area near the coast, characterised by Mediterranean maquis with prevalence of *Quercus ilex* L. The soil is calcareous, with exposed rocky layers in which cavities and crevices contain clayey and gritty soil beneath the litter and humus. The soil was dug down to a depth of up to 60 cm. On the same locality, in repeated surveys over several years, other endogean Coleoptera were also found: *Typhloiulopsis pavesii* Violi, 2025 (Staphylinidae, Osoriinae), *Reicheadella corcyrea* (Reitter, 1884) (Carabidae, Scaritinae), *Prioniomus cassiopaeus* Pavesi, 2010 (Carabidae, Trechinae), *Gynotyphlus* sp. (Staphylinidae, Leptotyphlinae) and other species of Curculionidae and Carabidae which are currently under study.

Discussion. The generic placement of the new species is debatable. According to the current taxonomic framework, trimerous tarsi, the chitinous thickenings in male visible tergite and sternite 7 (IX) and the deep furrow present only on sternite V are features exclusive to *Entomoculia* (s. str.) and *Allotyphlus* (*Moreotyphlus*). The antennae composed of 10 antennomeres, the absence of setae on the ventral lamina of the aedeagus and the bidentate labrum are consistent with *Entomoculia*. However, variations in the number of antennomeres within the same genus are already known, for example in *Cyrtotyphlus carpathicus* Struyve, 2022, so this character is doubtful. The gular sutures, when they diverge anteriorly, draw a pentagonal shape, like in *Allotyphlus*, rather than a semicircular space as in *Entomoculia*. Another difference from the rest of *Entomoculia* s. str. species is the lack of a spiniform process on the metatrochanters of the male, a trait also shared by the Canarian *Entomoculia* species (Hernando and López 2024) and other species of the subgenus *Stenotyphlus*. The aedeagus also diverges from the typical morphology of *Entomoculia*, due to the symmetrical and uniformly arched parameres (the left paramera is often angulate in *Entomoculia* species), the narrow and relatively straight ventral lamina in ventral view and the distal margin of the median lobe capsule reaching the apex of the parameres (which usually form a deep posterior indentation in *Entomoculia*). The structure of the genital urite, on the other hand, shows the shape also found in *Entomoculia*, with a deep indentation on the right margin of the genital aperture of the tergite 6 (VIII) and a genital segment with a more angulate basal margin [completely quadrate in *Entomoculia* (cf. Coiffait (1972); Poggi and Baviera (2013)), pointed in *Allotyphlus* (cf. Pace (1974, 1996)).

Based on these considerations, the new species is here interpreted as an archaic representative of the genus *Entomoculia*, still retaining some traits typical for *Allotyphlus* species. This interpretation is consistent with the hypothesis proposed by Pace (1996), according to which the last common ancestor of *Entomoculia* and *Allotyphlus* inhabited the Mesogeid and gave rise to the two lineages following its fragmentation in the Lutetian, respectively on the Tyrrhenid and the Aegeid plates. The type locality of *Entomoculia cassiopaea* sp. nov. lies precisely between the distributional ranges of the two taxa and represents, therefore, the easternmost species of the genus, followed by *Entomoculia sicana* Pace, 1993 from Sicily and *Entomoculia montisconeri* Pace, 1977 from Conero Mount (Marche, Italy) and Torino di Sangro (Abruzzo, Italy) and it is a first record of the genus for the Balkan Peninsula.

Allotyphlus (*Allotyphlus*) *pavesii* Violi, sp. nov.

https://zoobank.org/638692FA-DBD4-4C7D-9577-62C283BF4272

Figs 9–14

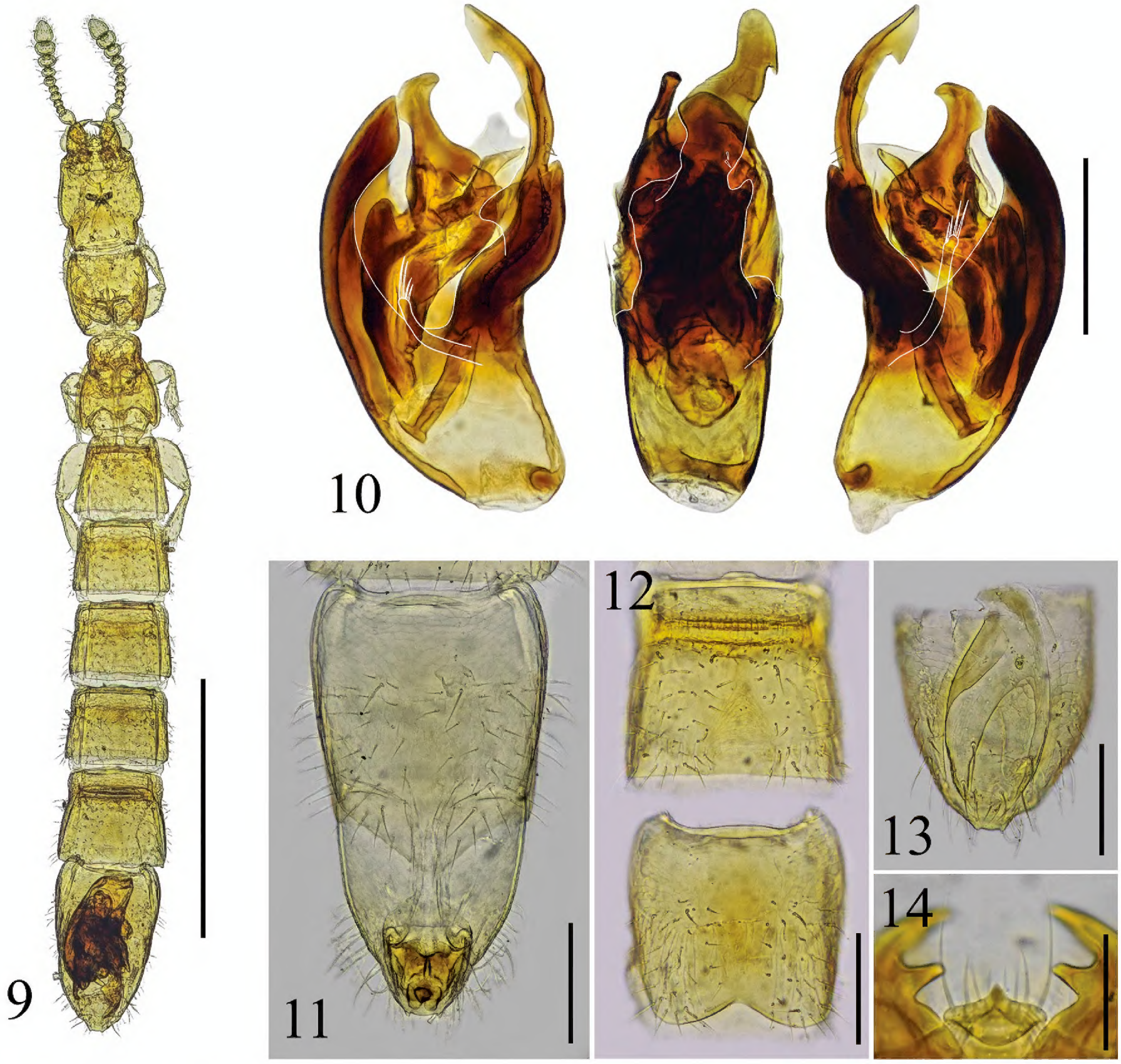
Type material. ***Holotype.*** Greece • ♂; Kérkyra, 2 km W Kassiopi, Apraos Bay; 39°47'40"N, 19°53'41"E; 10 m a.s.l.; 4–8 Dec 1999; M. Pavesi leg.; included in DMHF; MSNM. ***Paratypes***: Greece • 2 ♂ 4 ♀; same collecting data as holotype; cMV • 8 ♂ 8 ♀; same collecting locality and legit.; 29 Mar 1998; 1♂ cLF, 7 ♂ 8 ♀ cMP • 5 ♂ 2 ♀; same collecting locality and legit.; 22 Feb 1996; cMV. Glued on labels or included in DMHF.

Diagnosis. Maxillary palpi with palpomere 2 dilated, about twice as wide as 3; palpomere 4 smaller than 3; labrum bidentate; antennae with 11 antennomeres. Tarsal formula 3-3-3. Visible tergites 1–5 (III–VII) and visible sternite 2–4 (IV–VI) with shallow basal impression; visible sternite 5 (VII) with deep transversal furrow, visible sternite 6 (VIII) of male symmetric, with the posterior margin bilobate; male sternite 7 (IX) not strongly chitinised; aedeagus well-differentiated from its congeners, strongly chitinised, with median lobe prolonged by long curved ventral lamina ending in shape of hook, with two ventral setae; parameres short, with four apical setae.

Description. Male. ***Body*** (Fig. 9) about 1.75 mm long, completely depigmented.

Head capsule 1.3 times longer than wide, as wide as pronotum; head capsule separated from neck region by occipital constriction. Dorsal surface covered with robust, scale-like microreticulation, microstriolated posterior to constriction, both in ventral and dorsal side; gular sutures confluent anteriorly at about mid-length of head capsule, after meeting point again separated to two divergent sutures that draw pentagonal space with the mentum; maxillary palpi with palpomere 2 dilated, about twice as wide as 3; palpomere 4 smaller than 3. Labium with ligula divided into four lobes, the inner ones smaller and acuminate, the outer ones larger and rounded. Labrum (Fig. 14) monodentate, with 12 setae. Antennae with 11 antennomeres; scape longer than terminal antennomere, about 1.8 times as long as wide; pedicel as long as wide, as wide as scape, twice as long as antennomere 3; antennomeres 3–9 transverse; 3, 4 and 6 subequal in length; antennomere 5 larger than 4 and 6; 5 and 7 subequal in length; 7, 8, 9 and 10 with increasing width; terminal antennomere subtriangular, pointed at the apex, 1.1 times as long as wide.

Prothorax. Pronotum about 1.08 times as long as wide, widest in anterior third, after that convergent posteriorly; anterior margin straight, the posterior slightly convex; anterior and posterior angles widely rounded; dorsal surface with slight microreticulation on disc; procoxal cavities



Figures 9–14. *Allotyphlus* (*Allotyphlus*) *pavesii* sp. nov. from Kérkyra, Greece. **9.** Habitus (holotype); **10.** Aedeagus on the left, ventral and right side (parameres, capsule profile, ventral lamina and setae of the ventral lamina highlighted); **11.** Female visible sternite 5 (VII) and genital segment, ventral view; **12.** Male visible sternite 5 (VII) and 6 (VIII), ventral view; **13.** Male visible tergite and sternite 7 (IX), ventral view; **14.** Labrum. Scale bars: 0.5 mm (**9**), 0.1 mm (**10–13**), 0.05 mm (**14**).

rounded, with middle spiniform projection reaching the posterior margin of prosternum. Proepisternum and prosternum near procoxal cavities microreticulated.

Pterothorax. Elytra about 1.05 times as wide as long, smooth, with posterior margin straight. Scutellum, meso- and metaventrites microreticulated.

Abdomen. Visible tergites 1–5 (III–VII) and visible sternites 2–4 (IV–VI) with shallow basal impression, visible sternite 5 (VII) with deep transverse sulcus. Visible sternites and tergites 1–4 (III–VI) microreticulated in the anterior half, the sternite 5 (VII) microreticulated only in the anterior part up to the sulcus. Visible sternite 5 (VII) (Fig. 12, top) with posteromedian longitudinal depression, with shagreened surface. Visible tergite 6 (VIII) expanded in posterior half and with straight posterior margin. Visible sternite 6 (VIII) (Fig. 12, bottom) with shallow smooth depression, posterior margin symmetric, divided into two rounded lobes. Visible tergite 6 (VIII) (Fig. 13) with lateral margins not chitinised, right margin with a basal rounded lobe. Sternite 7 (IX) (Fig. 13) asymmetric, suboval, with a short distal part curved to the right side, posterior margin rounded, exposed part microreticulated with two longer setae on each side and 7–8 shorter setae near posterior margin. Tergite 8 (X) with a bidentate margin.

Legs short, all tibiae distally dilated, femora dilated in the middle, trochanters unarmed (only metatrochanters with a small tubercle), tarsal formula 3-3-3.

Aedeagus (Fig. 10) about 0.28 mm long, recumbent on left side in the abdomen, strongly chitinised, with a small basal bulb, median lobe prolonged by long curved ventral lamina ending in shape of hook, with two ventral setae; dorsal part of capsule strongly projected towards apex of ventral lamina, forming deep indentation on each side; parameres short, with four distal setae each, left one shorter and entirely curved, right one more straight, with four short apical setae.

Female. Similar to male. Margin of visible sternite 5 (VII) (Fig. 11) with sharp triangular shape. Genital segment as in Fig. 11.

Etymology. Patronymic, dedicated to its collector, Maurizio Pavesi, former curator of the entomological collections of the MSNM.

Distribution. Greece (Kérkyra).

Ecology. Syntopic with *Entomoculia* (s. str.) *cassiopaea* sp. nov. and only known from the type locality (see note on the ecology of the previous species).

Discussion. This new species clearly belongs to the homogeneous group composed of the five abovementioned species described from Kérkyra, all of which share similar structure of the aedeagus: *A. achileus* from Agios Deka and Agios Theodori (near Achilleio), *A. corcyranus* from Gouvia and Dassia (near the City of Kérkyra), *A. corcyricus* from Ropa Valley and *A. dexter* and *A. sinester* from Palaiokastritsa. *Allotyphlus pavesii* n. sp. is, therefore, the only species known to date from the northern part of the island, north of Mount Pantokrator. It can be distinguished from the other species by the sexual characters of both sexes, especially by the shorter ventral lamina of the aedeagus and its distinctive hook-shaped apex.

Conclusion

The Balkan Region confirms its richness in endogean faunal biodiversity (Hlaváč et al. 2017; Čeplík 2023), as remarkable new species can still be discovered even on a relatively small and previously explored island like Kérkyra. This highlights the need for further dedicated research. Moreover, the tribe Entomoculiini has proven to be a heterogeneous taxon and that further unexpected insights may still emerge, requiring a thorough integrative revision that would include molecular data, in order to better understand the delimitation of its genera and subgenera.

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